



# Parent Handbook

2449 Dundas Street

London, ON N5V 4V3

Tel: (519) 452-3242

[www.forestcitygym.com](http://www.forestcitygym.com)

[fcgcmanger@gmail.com](mailto:fcgcmanger@gmail.com)

June 2023

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. AN INTRODUCTION
2. THE COMPETITIVE PROGRAM
3. WOMEN'S PROGRAM
4. MEN'S PROGRAM
5. GROUPS AND LEVELS
6. COACHES
7. CLUB EXPECTATIONS
8. COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS
9. OUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY
10. PARENTS
  - i. Expectation of Parents
  - ii. Financial Expectation of Parents
11. HOLIDAYS
12. PARENTAL CONCERNS
13. VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS
14. ATHLETE HEALTH & WELLNESS
15. QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

## An Introduction

Congratulations on your entrance into our competitive program. We have prepared this handbook to inform parents and athletes of the responsibilities inherent in becoming a member of the competitive team. You should review all the material so that you are aware of the expectations of athletes and parents. This is a large commitment for the athlete, as well as the family, but we truly believe it also helps form some amazing children who take the benefit into their teens and then adulthood. The physical benefits and strength of this sport surpass most of the sports, but the benefits in their daily life. Even more noteworthy, life skills such as self-discipline, a strong work ethic, multi-tasking, strength, determination, self-esteem, respect, time management and focus on academics and in the gym. We have watched our athletes over the years go on to be such successful adults.

We are able to offer over 20,000 square feet of training space and new and improved equipment. Our highly certified staff continues to train each year taking courses, clinics, webinars, etc., to always be able to offer you the best instruction in London.

## The Competitive Program

Forest City Gymnastics Club is located at 2449 Dundas Street, London and has been offering gymnastic training since 1976. Up until June of 2017 we were a not for profit organization. We have since had our club purchased by co-owners and we are now a private gymnastics club. This purchase was to help grow our club and provide the best facility possible for our athletes. Each year we strive to provide our athletes with the best coaching, best equipment and best opportunities that we can.

Our mission is as follows:

- *To promote, foster and love the sport of gymnastics.*
- *To promote, foster and perpetuate gymnastics as an educative and constructive recreational and competitive experience.*
- *To study and teach all aspects of gymnastics and to interpret and disseminate information, knowledge and teaching skills concerning methodology and standards throughout the City of London and surrounding community.*
- *To encourage training programs and clinics on a regional level for instructors and other personnel active in the operation of gymnastics programs.*
- *To cooperate with the Gymnastics Ontario and the Canadian Gymnastics Federation in the development of the sport by the promotion of research and study into all aspects of gymnastic activity;*

- *To organize and participate in gymnastic competitions, public participation displays and clinics.*
- *To act as the liaison between gymnastics interest groups, participants, leaders, coaches and judges in the City of London and surrounding area, and the Ontario Gymnastics Federation; and*
- *To provide a facility and equipment to meet these goals.*

**Regarding our athletes, the philosophy of our competitive program is:**

***To allow each athlete the opportunity to grow as an individual in a program suited to their individual level of interest and ability by:***

- Providing quality instruction to all athletes in an environment of co-operation and active participation.
- Encouraging each athlete to reach her/his maximum potential.
- Providing a safe and encouraging environment for the athletes to participate in
- Developing in each athlete a sense of self-worth and accomplishment.
- Our coaches, through a regular and ongoing evaluation process, select athletes for consideration for the competitive program. Once your child has been identified, parents are contacted by the coaches to discuss the competitive program and determine their level of interest in becoming a member of the competitive program.

**Our competitive program offers the following levels of instruction:**

### **Women's Program**

**Developmental (ODP):** This is our program for advanced 4-7 year olds who show an early love of gymnastics, above average physical potential, lots of energy and an eagerness to learn.

- At this level, we introduce proper body alignment, flexibility, conditioning and coordination. This will help facilitate learning the fundamentals of the sport.
- Athletes typically train 4-8 hours per week through the school year and 4-6 hours a week in July and August (daytime hours). —Training may be scheduled Sunday through Saturday each week from September to June.
- The athletes compete 1-2 times per year if they are 6+ years of age.

**Compulsory:** This is our program for advanced athletes from the ages of 7+ years of age and levels from 1-5. These athletes compete levels 1-2 as an invitational athlete or levels 3-5 age 9+ as a provincial athlete.

- These athletes may participate in events for the Ontario Competitive Program (OCP). Levels will range from 1-5 under the Junior Olympic rules. Athletes typically train 9-16 hours per week through the school year and 9-16 hours a week in July and August (daytime hours). Training may be scheduled Sunday through Saturday each week.
- These athletes will compete 2-4 times per year based on eligibility and qualifications.

These athletes compete set routines that are the same for their level regardless of age. They are judged based on form and their adherence to the specified standards of the skills and routines in their level.

**Xcel:** This is a program for athletes that are over 9 years of age and would like a different route than the compulsory qualifying system.

- There are three divisions in the Xcel program: Bronze, Silver, Gold.
- All of the Xcel divisions have set routine requirements but the composition of skills and choreography is 'optional'.
- This program is a great way to build routines more tailored for the athlete.
- The Xcel program is a fit for athletes who play multiple sports or who may be ready for more of a challenge than the Compulsory program but are not quite ready for Optionals.

Trestin Brooks is the Manager of this program. Any questions or concerns can be sent to her directly at: tbrooksfcgc@gmail.com

•

**Optional:** This is our program for athletes that are over 9 years of age and level 6 and up and includes training for provincial and national level.

- These athletes have previous gymnastics training and are seeking a more challenging experience. Athletes compete on a provincial or national basis in the appropriate category based on age and skill level.
- Athletes at this level typically train 16-20 hours per week through the school year and 18-24 hours a week in July and August (daytime hours). Training may be scheduled Sunday through Saturday each week.
- These athletes compete 4-8 times per year based on age, level, qualifications and eligibility.

## Men's Program

### Pre-Competitive & Invitational:

This is our program for athletes age 8+ years of age who have the potential to compete in the future at the provincial or national level.

- Basic skills and connections are introduced, and flexibility and conditioning become more challenging. Athletes typically train 6-9 hours per week through the school year and 9-12 hours a week in July and August (typically daytime hours). Training may be scheduled Sunday through Saturday each week.
- 
- Athletes may participate in interclub events/competitions.

### Provincial:

This is our program for the most advanced athletes 9+ years of age and older.

- These athletes have previous gymnastics training and are seeking a more challenging experience.
- Athletes compete at a provincial or national competition in the appropriate category based on age and skill level. Athletes at this level typically train 12-16 hours per week through the school year and 12-16 hours a week in July and August (daytime hours). Training may be scheduled Sunday through Saturday each week.

## Groups and Levels

- Our goal is to allow athletes to grow as individuals in a program suited to their level of interest and ability.
- We strive to ensure that athletes train and compete at the appropriate level.
- **Coaches** decide what level is safe and appropriate for each athlete.
- Decisions are made always with the best interests of the athlete in mind.
- Our program managers are in constant communication with the coach on each athlete's needs.
- Remember that each athlete is on their own journey and comparing them to other athletes is not healthy for you or your child.

## Coaches

### Qualifications

- National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) Minimum Comp1 requirement
- Risk Management
- Police Record checks
- Standard First Aid and CPR
- Staff has varying levels of experience, both coaching and competing
- All staff annually sign and adhere to the Gymnastics Ontario Code of Ethics
- Varying judging experience

## Club Expectations

### Expectations of Athletes

- Training is exclusive to FCGC. In conjunction with other clubs, our competitive athletes are not to do any gymnastics related training, lessons or classes at any other facility.
- All athletes in the competitive program, regardless of level or experience are expected to demonstrate a positive and respectful attitude towards coaches, athletes and our facility.
- All athletes are part of the Forest City Gymnastics team and are expected to encourage other athletes to achieve their best both during competitions and training.
- Attendance and punctuality at practices are important for all athletes in the group and the coaches will use their discretion to discuss any attendance issues with the athletes and the parents.

- All gymnasts are expected to attend their scheduled training. We do not offer make up time for competitive training when you are away. We ask that all athletes be punctual. If you will be late or absent, please email [fgcmanager@gmail.com](mailto:fgcmanager@gmail.com) or call the office at 519-452-3242.
- Athletes are to stay off equipment until your coach is with you and has said otherwise.
- Be appropriately dressed in gymnastics attire during training. ***When training you must be wearing a properly fitted leotard (gymsuit) and hair tied back. No sports bras or training with shirt off (male).***
- Ensure that excess clothing that is discarded after warm up is put away in their lockers or cubbies prior to beginning active training, be respectful of locker rooms and washrooms by keeping them clean and not abusing lockers, sinks, mirrors and any other equipment as well as property of others in the locker rooms and washrooms
- Conduct themselves as respectful, responsible athletes during breaks and ensure the break room is clean after breaks.
- Keep the gym area clean including the chalk area.
- Annually sign and adhere to the Gymnastics Ontario Code of Ethics
- When an athlete is injured, the athlete will be required to provide a doctor's note before training/conditioning will resume.
- Use of electronics (including cell phones) during training or competition is strictly prohibited during training hours. With coach permission may be used on break. Athletes will be asked to leave immediately if they are using any electronic devices during training.
- FCGC has 3 devices (iPod and iPads) for capturing progressions, corrections and new skills. If an athlete or parent would like a copy they can be shared with coach or manager approval
- Athletes are to remember that gymnastics is a privilege and not a right.
- We have a hands-off policy. All athletes are to keep their hands off any other athlete or coach.
- Athletes are to not use improper words or curse words in the facility.
- Athletes in the competitive programs who are 18 yrs and younger are not permitted to leave the facility during their training hours.
- FCGC is not to be used in any social media without the consent of the owners. Athletes are not able to post any photos of coaches or athletes without the consent of the athlete or coach.
- No social media accounts should be created under the FCGC or Forest City Gymnastics name unless by the club itself.
- Athletes are to not privately message any coach or management on any social media

## Competition Expectations

### Expectations of Athletes

- All athletes in the competitive program, regardless of level or experience, are expected to stay on the competition floor unless they have the permission of the Chief Judge and their coach. Athletes who leave the floor without permission may be disqualified.
- All athletes are to stay for the entire meet awards ceremony regardless of ranking in that meet. Athletes who leave the floor will be subject to a deduction from the Judges.
- All athletes are part of the Forest City Gymnastics team and are expected to encourage all other athletes and support one another and shall have no negative chants, mocking of other athletes or speaking rudely of other clubs.

- Team gym suit (you should be wearing this when you arrive at the gym, and have a back up suit in your bag)
- Team tracksuit (you should be wearing this when you arrive at the gym)
- A full water bottle
- A light, healthy snack (NO junk food – fruit or energy bar is best)
- Grip bag with grips and tape for hands on bars (if you don't use grips, be sure you have tape, Band-Aids and pro-wrap in case a blister rips open on your hand – you will still have to do your routine for the judges)
- Hair Clips, hair elastics and hairspray (hair must be tied back with no flyway's when you arrive at the gym, but you will need extra hair supplies for that stubborn hair that just won't stay in place!)
- We reserve the right to scratch an athlete from a competition if their gym behaviour is not reflective of FCGC's code of conduct.

## Our Coaching Philosophy

If you have any questions of a technical nature or related to the coaching, we encourage you to discuss it with your child's coach first.

Only through effective communication can we best serve the individual needs of your child.

Our coaches are committed to providing each athlete with the skills, knowledge, support and encouragement to be the best that they can be. Part of this learning experience is having athletes make choices and learn from the consequences. Athletes are responsible for their behavior and will ultimately decide how much or how little of this support they will use. The coaches recognize that from time to time athletes may not be as motivated as necessary. Examples include:

- a) an athlete does not appear to be giving 100%
- b) an athlete continues to make the same mistakes and does not appear to be making a conscientious effort to correct their mistakes
- c) an athlete appears to be in a bad mood
- d) an athlete appears to be overly tired
- e) an athlete may be arriving hungry.

In situations such as these, athletes will be given an opportunity to change their behavior. In the event that there is no change, the coaches will offer a choice to the athletes: to condition or take a break or get dressed and go home. Coaches will respect the athlete's decision recognizing that there are times when leaving the training session is better since the class is not disrupted, an injury may be avoided and the athletes can come back fresher for the next practice.

There may be other situations where the behavior of athletes is such that they will be asked to go home immediately.



Examples would include:

- a) behavior that jeopardizes their safety or that of others in the gym
- b) inappropriate behavior (swearing, touching, fighting)
- c) showing disrespect for coaching staff or athletes.

In extreme cases, an athlete may be dismissed from the program.

Our coaching staff asks for your support in implementing this philosophy. There will be times when athletes choose to go home, and we ask that you respect your child's wishes so they can learn from the consequences of their decisions. If you have any questions or concerns about this philosophy, please speak with your child's coach (519-452 3242 or [fccmanager@gmail.com](mailto:fccmanager@gmail.com)).

We have a team set up in place to ensure the best support of our athletes. Lisa Rowe-Brown is our ODP manager. Trestin Brooks is our Compulsory and Excel Manager and Merritt Lymburner is our Optional and MAG manager. Please see program descriptions above for contact information. We will always send you in the right direction to seek the best guidance and advice for any questions you may have.

## Parents

The families of each competitive athlete will provide the Club with an active e-mail address they will check regularly. It is the responsibility of each family to check for email on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date with current events at the gym. Almost all announcements, notifications and changes will be sent by email.

### Expectations of Parents:

Parents are valuable members and are encouraged to assist in club activities including:

- serving on any volunteer committees
- promoting the club within the community
- actively participating in fundraising projects
- working annual gymnastics meets and/or golf tournaments
- assisting with setting up and tearing down equipment in preparation for gym meets, demonstrations and/or competitions.
- Dropping your children off and returning to the gym to pick them up in a timely manner. Athletes waiting for pick-up MUST remain in the locker room or front lobby. If parents are more than 30mins late to pick up a late-pick up fee may be charged.
- Checking email for updates and changes to training
- **Adhere to our viewing policy that directs 15mins at the start of practice and 15 prior to the end of practice ONLY.**
- This helps ensure the safety of athletes during training by limiting distraction and disruption to the coaches and athletes.

- Come to the loading dock on drop off and pick up to ensure athletes are always under direct supervision. It is easier for athletes to see parents if they get out of the car and walk to the loading dock.
- We do not offer private lessons for competitive athletes unless at the request of their coach or our program managers.
- We understand injuries happen here or at home and school. We ask that you talk with their coach and/or program managers to come up with a plan to best suit their needs and recovery from injury.

## Financial Expectations of Parents:

Monthly payments for the competitive program are based on 48 weeks of training and not 52. We have two weekly closures per year and some holiday and cancellation days (Winter break, March break, statutory holidays and summer holidays) that amount to 4 weeks of unpaid training time. No allowances will be made for classes missed. Training may be scheduled Sunday through Saturday each week. Please note: On PD Days, March Break, Christmas Holidays and summer training times may switch to daytime hours based on coach's availability.

Monthly payments for training are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and will be paid through either the credit card or PAD information you have provided us.

All competitive fees based on your contract are due on the due date. They can be paid by cheque, credit card, cash, or debit at the front desk. Payment of those fees are mandatory in order for your athlete to be insured, be signed up to compete, and participate in our dance program.

Your insurance fee is a Gymnastics Ontario fee to cover the athlete for insurance and the fee is determined by the level they train and compete.

Competition fee is based on the number of competitions you will be attending each year. This fee covers the registration fee due to the host club, mileage, per diem, hotel and session pay for the coaches to attend. Competition fees are due based on group numbers. We send out meet information as soon as possible and if you choose to not attend or book something in its place there will be no refund.

Dance fee - They will have a portion of their training that includes dance (ballet, turns, leaps, splits) as well as any beam and floor routine work. We have a paid dance instructor. The WAG program also covers choreography of floor routines for the Optional and Excel which is why our dance fee varies from group to group.

Championships fees are determined when the qualification lists come out. Every athlete who qualifies to attend Ontario Championships will receive an email from the office upon qualifying. Championships fees are due on the date in the email. In order to be eligible for Championships, you must be level 3 + and age 9+.

The volunteer fee is a yearly refundable fee, we run 2 or more events where we need volunteers and at the end of the year you would earn your credits back. We will refund those credits at the end of the year. Volunteering for four sessions between two meets will earn you back all of your credits.

Fees not included in contracts are things such as Tour Selection (Levels 6-9, Age 14+ and Level 10 age 12+), Team Ontario (upon qualification from Tour Selection) and Eastern Canadian Championships (upon qualification from Ontario Championships). Once the coaches have determined eligibility, you will receive an email from the office with the information and fees with the due date. If you do qualify for either Tour or Eastern Canadian Championships, FCGC covers the cost of your competition suit and training suit. All meet and travel expenses are to be arranged by the families of the athletes who qualified.

There will be a **\$35.00** non-sufficient funds charge levied on any credit card, PAD or returned cheque. All cheques should be made payable to Forest City Gymnastics or FCGC London Inc. There will be a **\$35.00** non-sufficient funds charge levied on any returned cheques. Forest City Gymnastics reserves the rights to terminate training in the event that monthly fees and/or other charges noted above are in arrears or where returned cheques are a recurring problem. Athletes will only be registered to attend meets if their training and other fees are not in arrears. Any late fees assessed by the host club caused by delays in registration due to arrears will be the responsibility of the parent.

Acceptance into one of the competitive programs is granted on the understanding that you and your child are making a **one-year** commitment to the club. If for any reason after the commencement of the competitive season the athlete, in consultation with her/his coach and parents, decides to withdraw from our program, we request a formal letter of withdrawal outlining the reason(s) for the decision as well as a minimum of thirty (30) days notice. This letter should be addressed to the General Manager/Owner of the club. This is a requirement prescribed by Gymnastics Ontario and is important especially if your child is switching to another gymnastics club. All fees are non-refundable.

Summer training is an important time to learn new skills and prepare for the upcoming competitive season. Typically, summer training hours are increased. We encourage all athletes to participate in summer training but recognize that this is not always possible. We also have a waiting list of athletes and so we are unable to hold a spot for an athlete indefinitely. As a result, in the event that an athlete is away for one month we will hold the athlete's spot provided the monthly fee is paid. If an athlete is going to have to miss more than one month's training, we ask that the athlete withdraw from the program. Upon the athlete's return they will be assessed and re-admitted into the competitive program provided there is an available spot. We will make our best efforts to accommodate a returning athlete, but we cannot guarantee a spot will be available at that time.

Normally no adjustments to fees will be given. Request for fee adjustments related to prolonged absence (i.e. Illness or injury) must be submitted in writing and will be considered on a case by case basis.

Due to safety reasons, athletes must have 85% attendance or better in the month leading up to competition in order to participate. No refunds will be provided.

Before and after hours penalties may apply to any time outside the hours your child is scheduled to be at training. We understand there may be times that you are late or early on drop off but if it is a persistent situation, we will have a meeting with the family. Staff would have to remain longer and therefore be paid longer so there may be penalties for constant lateness. We understand some siblings of athletes may not have the same training times but it is important to ensure they are not being left here to wait longer than 15 minutes before or after training.

## Holidays

### Statutory Holidays and Other Special Dates we are closed

- July 1 - Canada Day
- August - Civic Holiday
- September - Labor Day
- October - Thanksgiving Sunday & Monday
- December - Christmas Day, Annual Winter closure
- January 1 - New Year's Day
- February - Family Day
- March/April - Easter (Good Friday) and Easter Monday
- May - Victoria Day, Mother's Day
- June - Father's Day, Annual closure

## Parental Concerns

Despite the best efforts of coaches and staff we know that from time-to-time issues may arise with respect to your child. We have developed the following protocol to facilitate a successful resolution to any concerns you might have.

- Speak to your child's coach directly and respectfully about your concerns and/or any issues that the child may be facing. Coaches are available to meet with parents by appointment only and in attendance as well as program director. Please email [fccgmanager@gmail.com](mailto:fccgmanager@gmail.com) to book your appointment.
- We ask parents to remember that negativity spreads quickly. While you might think one thing, it may not be the opinion of others and we ask that you do not spread negativity in our gym club. There is not a moment in which we are not doing what we feel is best for your child within their gymnastics and we would be happy to have a meeting with you directly to address any concerns you may have.
- Please note, the front desk can take payments on account for the competitive program and will take messages but cannot answer coach or program related questions. They will pass the message onto the appropriate person. Competitive questions can be time consuming, and we ask that you deliver the message and keep the front desk open for our recreational parents. All meetings/training questions/competition information, etc. is to go to [fccgmanager@gmail.com](mailto:fccgmanager@gmail.com).

## Volunteer Requirements

### **Emerald Cup**

In order to fulfill your Volunteer Hours Commitment, each family in the competitive stream (MAG or WAG) must sign up for a minimum of 2 sessions (4-6 hour sessions) at our Annual Emerald Cup Invitational. You will never be asked to volunteer during your child's competition time.

### **Ontario Championships**

In order to fulfill your Volunteer Hours Commitment, each family in the competitive stream (MAG or WAG) must sign up for a minimum of 2 sessions (6-hour sessions) at Ontario Championships Levels 3-5. You will never be asked to volunteer during your child's competition time.

We also ask that you sign up for set up and tear down of both events.

It takes a serious commitment on the part of athletes and their families to participate in the competitive program.

### **Athlete Health**

There is a lot that the body goes through with any sport. Gymnastics is no exception. Athletes that train competitively in sport need general maintenance such as chiropractor, massage, float sessions, acupuncture, etc. We have some companies that we trust and work closely with that have had great success in dealing with injuries.

Call the Fowler Kennedy Sport Medicine Clinic to book an appointment to be assessed by one of their Sport and Exercise Medicine physicians or Physiotherapists. They deal with sport and activity related injuries, sport related concussions. They also have an Acute Injury Clinic, for injuries within the last week."



Western University, 3 M Centre, 1151 Richmond Street, London, ON N6A 3K7 Tel: (519) 661-3011

Fanshawe College, Room J1004, 1001 Fanshawe College Blvd, London, ON N5Y 5R6 Tel: (519) 452-4230

## **THE HEALTH NETWORK**

Massage, Physiotherapy, Chiropractic

43 Oxford Street, London, ON N6H 1R5

Tel: (519)-433-7400

## **LONDON FLOAT**

215 Fanshawe Park Rd W, London, ON N6G 5A9

Email: [info@londonfloattherapy.com](mailto:info@londonfloattherapy.com)

Telephone: 519-673-5628 **(\$25.00 off per float using code forest city gym)**

- improves performance and fitness
- loosens muscles
- detoxifies joints and muscles
- helps regeneration from sporting injuries

## **MENTAL TRAINING**

As important as the body is, the mind is just as important to keep healthy. We have worked with some people over time that have proven to have great success in getting our mind where it needs to be whether in training or prior to or at a competition.

*Natascha Wesch Consulting - Elite Mind Performance*

*224 Riverside Drive*

*London, Ontario N6H-1E6*

[nwesch@uwo.ca](mailto:nwesch@uwo.ca)

## **ATHLETE SELF CARE**

1. Sleep is important. If you are too tired to train, don't come to the gym.
2. All athletes must eat breakfast before daytime training. Remember - food is your fuel.
3. All athletes must bring snacks and if summer training, lunch.
4. NO pop, chips, chocolate, or junk food – you will not be allowed to eat these at the gym.
5. Fruit is full of natural sugar and is a good, healthy alternative.
6. Aim to bring the following daily:
  - 3 different food groups
  - 3 different colours of foods
  - carbohydrates – these are your #1 source of energy (NO low carb eating)
7. Water is the best fluid, and lots of it. We do have some at the front desk for \$1.00 but we ask that you send lots of water for summer training.
8. Rips happen a lot in this sport and the hands have to get tough before they are fully ready for bars. We celebrate rips here as a day of hard work and one step closer to tough hands. The rip should have any excess skin removed, hands washed and during practice the coach will apply athletic tape so they can continue training. Once practice is over, we suggest going home and soaking the hand to sooth it and applying an antibacterial ointment. The coach will continue to apply athletic tape for training days until the rip has closed. (Athletes are to have their own athletic tape in their lockers) We do not want the athletes to stay home with a rip as it does not prepare them for later training or competition.

## **Questions or Concerns?**

We hope that this handbook provides the necessary information for you to be able to make an informed decision about joining or continuing with the competitive program.

It takes a serious commitment on the part of athletes and their families to participate in the competitive program.

If you have any questions of a technical nature, please contact Cindy Smith-Rex, Owner/General Manager at 519-452-3242 or e-mail us at [fcgcmanger@gmail.com](mailto:fcgcmanger@gmail.com).